

Season's Greetings

10

Great Holiday Gift Ideas for the FOH Reader

By George Petersen

Audio professionals are not easy people to buy gifts for. If they've hung out in the right circles, they probably have all the Mini Maglites, Velcro cable wraps and Swiss Army knives (in every configuration) they'll ever need. With that in mind, here are some essential — and highly useful — items any sound reinforcement pro

would appreciate. Simply tear out this page, use that Sharpie on your lanyard to circle what you want and leave this lying around where the right person can find it.

So in no particular order, here are the official 2015 *FRONT of HOUSE* gift selections for the well-accessorized sound tech — whether yourself or someone on your crew.



SoundTools Sniffer and Sender Kit

Designed by Rat Sound to deal with the "real world" of pro audio, this simple XLR cable tester has a battery source at one end, and three LEDs on the other half to indicate cable shorts/opens/phase reverse conditions. It can also display whether phantom power is active, and as a two-piece unit, it can test long cable feeds, such as snakes or wall panels — in a matter of minutes. Mine has saved my posterior on numerous occasions, and at \$55, it's a must-have for any gig bag or toolkit.

ratsoundsales.com



Focusrite RedNet AM2

Coming in 2016 (sorry, not shipping yet) the RedNet AM2 is a stereo monitoring unit with headphone and XLR line output jacks that can tap into any Dante source and provide an analog signal for monitoring. It has dual locking etherCON ports for network and daisy-chain connections, individual L/R level pots and a mute button. The AM2 fits into lots of applications, ranging from monitoring/troubleshooting Dante feeds to everyday things like supplying backstage, lobby or greenroom speakers. Price: TBA.

focusrite.com



Latchlake Music Xtra Boom

Microphone placements can be tricky sometimes, and the Xtra Boom is a new take that refines the concept of a mic boom. Not only does this let you hang several mics on a single stand (from 5/8 to 1-3/16 inches in diameter), but it also has a slick single lever lock system for fast, secure adjustment of the extension, orientation and spin of the boom. Xtra Booms are offered in 12, 18 and 24-inch lengths, in black or chrome, and retail at \$75.

latchlakemusic.com



ProTester DMX Analyzer

Yeah, I know it's a lighting item, but more than a few of us wind up doing lights *and* sound — either occasionally or regularly. Priced at \$210, the ProTester is a pocket unit that tests DMX lighting cables, displays the presence and polarity of DMX data (in isolation or while in use) — all via a simple nine-indicator LED display. It even has a built-in LED flashlight and comes with a leather belt holster.

tmb.com



Gig Gloves

Designed specifically for gigging professionals, Gig Gloves offer protection during load ins/outs. The palm side has padding where you grab handles with a non-slip surface, while flexible rubber bumpers on the reverse side protect your knuckles. A foldover feature for the thumb, index, and middle fingers lets the wearer open just the tip for using touch screens or handling small items like drum keys or connectors. Retail is \$30.

gig-gear.com/giggloves



Shure KSE1500 Electrostatic Earphones

Want to kick up your portable listening system a notch? The KSE1500 Electrostatic Earphone System — the world's first Sound Isolating™ electrostatic earphones — does the trick. Based on earpiece drivers with massless diaphragms, the system offers superb transients with wide 10 Hz to 50 kHz frequency response, with customizable EQ in the 24-bit/96 kHz DAC/amplifier (with USB and analog inputs) that connects to the earphones via a 6-pin Lemo connector. MAP is \$2,999.

shure.com



Lavaliers Be Gone!

They do have their place, but I've never been a huge fan of lavalier mics. However, these days, with headset mics becoming miniaturized to the point of near-invisibility while offering superb performance (such as the Countryman H6 shown here, priced from \$670), this is a great time to get the pastor at your church or the artist you work with to step up to the convenience of a headworn transducer. Another possibility is DPA's d:screet Necklace Microphone (priced from \$649). Its round-the-neck design provides another alternative approach.

countryman.com; dpamicrophones.com



FOH T-Shirt

Say it loud, say it proud! Offered in always-fashionable basic black, the shirt front tells who you are, while the back is emblazoned with answers to 10 of the stupid questions you're bombarded with at shows. These range from "No, I can't get anything signed for you" to "Yes, I know what all these knobs do" and eight more tired old queries you've heard 1,000 times. An audio *fashionista* must, it's priced at only \$20 — or \$25 in "husky" sizes.

plsnbookshelf.com/t-shirts.html



dbx goRack

This pocket-sized powerhouse is one of the coolest ideas since sliced bread. It's designed as a loudspeaker management processor for feeding powered speakers, with EQ, compression, Automatic Feedback Suppression, Sub-harmonic Synthesis and more. It has grab and go presets for EQ, so it's not going to replace your DriveRack or Lake processor. However, goRack's two combo mic/line inputs and 1/8-inch stereo input let it double as a mini mixer

to summed mono or stereo XLR outs, making it ideal for solo artists or duos, weddings, speech/presentation applications, or simply as a backup to a small mixer you're using on such gigs. Retail is \$99.

dbxpro.com



The BIG Bow

If your recipient was *really* good this year, perhaps a seven-seat Tesla Motors Model X electric SUV might make for an impressive holiday surprise, and has a 250-mile range, does 0-to-60 mph in 3.2 seconds and lots of space for gear. One of those — or a nice audio accessory, like a new line array rig or DiGiCo's flagship SD7 digital console — would bring a smile to any live engineer. The downside is, these are tough to gift wrap. Given this reality, you might want to top it off with a Dodson EZ-630 giant bow to add that festive touch for only \$37.50. We should emphasize that the car, line array or console is *not* included in that price.

dodson-group.com